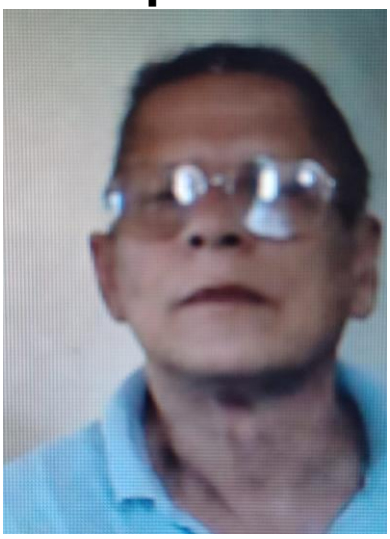
MMR 0515 Stephe Jitts Australia



My journey to MMR was a long, if simple one. As a lad of five, I was walking down Oxford Street while visiting London and as usual was pestering my father for a train set. The harassed man finally relented and approached a nearby six-foot 11-inch tall Bobby. “Where can I buy this boy a train set?” was the inquiry. With obvious pride, the Bobby swelled to his full six foot-11 inches and pointed. “Just around the corner Sir. Hamley's. Best toy shop in the world!”

I still have the original 0-6-0, though it hasn't been run for many years. As a child my Triang train set expanded to include a variety of sets, even some early Australian stuff. A 40 class look alike springs to mind. We started with series 3 track, then series 4 and finally my first bit of flexi track, but never had a layout to be seen.

As a young married man, my good wife and I took on a house parenting job with 11 foster children. Of course it was mandatory we had a trainset, as should be the case for all children. Equally of course, we needed a large dining table to seat us all. So it was only natural to build a 9 x 5 table with a top that could be removed to reveal a 8 x 4 layout!

That layout lasted for some years until we had a break-in in which the layout was severely vandalised. What could be saved was put into a box while I sulked for a number of years. That just happened to coincide with establishing my career and bringing up children.

However, when my youngest son was nearing his second Christmas, he began to show an interest in that wonder of wonders "Thomas." Kangaroo Valley Historic Railway was born. Six hollow doors on fold-up legs were the start and still form the core of the KVHR today.

Sometime later, as the KVHR grew, I was introduced to the NMRA. Its Achievement Program led to many improvements and modifications that ultimately led to the layout being featured in the AMRM and then to award of an MMR.

Now, twenty years old, KVHR continues to develop and grow. It will do so, I'm sure, until Iam no longer capable of progressing it. The lessons of the MMR journey are still being implemented. One of those is that there is always something new to be learned, practiced and mastered, but the real lesson is that the Achievement Program is just school and we all know that most learning happens after one leaves school. Doesn't it?

Stephe Jitts MMR 515

(Re-typed and very slightly edited by John Coy, MMR 730 on June 27, 2024)